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The Tusome activity is increasing access to textbooks and other learning materials for class one and class two pupils in Kenya, helping them “learn to read” so they can “read to learn”. In photo: Teachers and pupils of Ngege Primary School in Kisumu County with Tusome books. Photo credit: Eric Onyiego/USAID

KENYA

TUSOME EARLY GRADE READING (TUSOME) ACTIVITY

Learning to read fluently in primary school is the most critical foundational skill and the greatest predictor of academic success. Tusome (“Let’s Read” in Kiswahili) is a flagship partnership between USAID and the Government of Kenya’s (GoK) Ministry of Education (MOE).

Tusome is implemented in all public primary schools and 1,500 Alternative Provision of Basic Education and Training (APBET) institutions (low-cost private schools) across Kenya through the Ministry. The goal for Tusome is to improve the literacy outcomes of 7.4 million pupils by 2019.

The Tusome technical approach employs research-driven learning materials, proven teaching methodologies and a cutting-edge tablet-based feedback and monitoring system. To ensure sustainability, the funding, oversight and implementation of Tusome will transition to the GoK and local entities during the final year of the activity.

OUR WORK

The Tusome activity is supporting literacy development and fostering a reading culture among early-grade pupils, including those visually-and-hearing-impaired, across Kenya. Tusome will develop and distribute over 24 million English and Kiswahili textbooks, workbooks and supplemental readers by December 2019 to pupils in classes one, two and three, ensuring a pupil to textbook ratio of 1:1.

Tusome uploads real-time learner performance data and makes it available to local and national education stakeholders. This helps create reading champions and fosters accountability throughout the system.

Tusome trains Curriculum Support Officers, administrators, teachers and instructional coaches based on practical classroom-based experiences. The trainings help develop teachers' pedagogical skills in critical technical areas such as phonemic awareness, reading comprehension, lesson planning, and curriculum coverage. Head teachers (principals) are trained to provide instructional leadership for their schools while managing the acquisition, utilization and maintenance of the new learning materials.

In addition, Senior County and national education leaders are trained on new reading techniques, and address gaps in the relevant laws, policies, strategies, and regulations that impact early-grade reading.

Tusome includes two special funds to encourage community accountability for better reading outcomes: the Youth Fund and the Partnership Fund. The Youth Fund empowers local youth groups to work with younger children in their communities to improve reading skills. The Partnership Fund links public and private-sector partners to develop local reading programs and instill a reading culture across the country.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Since 2014, Tusome has:

- Empowered over 1,100 Curriculum Support Officers in all 47 counties with innovative teaching methodologies to provide instructional support to teachers.
- Trained every lower primary school teacher in 23,890 schools with state-of-the-art interventions that define how Kenyan children learn to read.
- Developed and distributed specialized teaching and learning materials for sight- and hearing-impaired pupils.
- Provided more than 20 million new textbooks to schools to date
- Delivered results: 68% of learners demonstrate reading fluency and comprehension of grade level text in English at the end of grade 2, while 67% do so in Kiswahili.

BUDGET \$73.8 million

DURATION
2014 – 2019

ACTIVITY LOCATIONS

All public primary schools nationwide plus 1,500 low-cost private schools in Kenya

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

RTI International

KEY PARTNERS

Ministry of Education,
Teachers Service Commission
Kenya Institute for Curriculum Development
Kenya Institute of Special Education
Kenya National Examinations Council

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